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Dr. ASSHETON's  
**SERMON**

Before the  
**SONS of CLERGY-MEN,**  
In St. PAUL's Cathedral,  
Decemb. 5. 1699.

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Dr. ASSHETON'S  
S. E. R. M. O. N.

Before the  
BISHOPS of CLERGY-MEN,  
In ST. PAUL'S Cathedral,  
Decemb. 7. 1699.

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A  
S E R M O N  
P R E A C H E D

AT THE

*Anniversary Meeting*

OF THE

SONS OF CLERGY-MEN,

In St. P A U L's Cathedral,

Decemb. 5. 1699.

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By WILLIAM ASSHETON, D.D.  
Rector of *Beckenham* in *Kent*, and  
Chaplain to his Grace the Duke  
of *Ormond*.

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# SERMON

PREACHED

AT THE

Anniversary Meeting

OF THE

Sons of Clergy-Men

In St. Paul's Cathedral

December 7. 1892.

WILLIAM ASSHINGTON, D.D.  
Rector of Becham in Kent, and  
Chaplain to his Grace the Duke  
of Devon.



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To the much Honoured

Sir Nathan Wright,

Roger Williams,

Edward Eaton,

Mr. Robert Edwards,

Francis Edwards,

Thomas Vernon,

Mr.

Robert Fides,

James Ford,

Arthur Zouch,

Oliver Whitby,

Robert Harris,

Arthur Gandy,

STEWARDS of the late Feast of the  
Sons of the Clergy.

Gentlemen,

**W**HEN I have First made  
my humble Acknowledg-  
ment (not only to your  
Selves, by whose immediate Command  
this Discourse is Published, but also  
to his Grace my Lord Archbishop of

A 3

Canter-

## The Epistle Dedicatory.

Canterbury, my Lord Mayor, my Lords the Bishops, and the Rest of that Honourable and Judicious Audience, by whom it was approved far beyond my Expectation or Desert) I do then crave leave further to express my Satisfaction, That one chief Design I had in composing this Sermon was so acceptable to you, viz. The promoting a General Subscription for the Relief of Poor Widows and Children of Clergy-men.

Having observed that several other Orders and Professions do maintain their own Poor, I thought it seasonable to remind you, That it is at least decent, to say no more, that the Clergy likewise should attempt the same. And I have great cause to hope, with a little Application, the Thing will be found very practicable.

For,

## The Epistle Dedicatory.

For, if every Clergy-man, whose Preferment is Four Hundred Pounds per Annum, or more, would please to Subscribe and Pay in but Two Pounds Yearly. If he who hath Three Hundred Pounds, would Subscribe One Pound yearly. If he who hath Two Hundred Pounds, would Subscribe Ten Shillings yearly. If he who hath One Hundred Pounds per Annum would Subscribe Five Shillings Yearly: This I am confident would Answer expectation.

When the Clergy (whose chearful Compliance with this humble Motion I cannot suspect) have proceeded thus far; 'tis then not to be doubted, but that those Sons of Clergy-men who are of the Laity, will as chearfully follow so good an Example.

If

## The Epistle Dedicatory.

If I am censured as too forward, in  
being thus Particular, my Zeal and  
Concern for the Clergy and their De-  
scendants must Apologize for me.

I am,

Worthy Gentlemen,

Your most humble,

faithful Servant,

*William Assheton.*

---

ECCLES.

**ECCLES. IX. 10.**

*Whatsoever thy hand findeth to Do,  
Do it with thy Might; for there is  
no Work, nor Device, nor Know-  
ledge, nor Wisdom in the Grave,  
whither thou goest.*

**T**Hese words are a seasonable  
Admonition to Diligence  
and Industry: To be ac-  
tive, vigorous and urgent, in doing  
all the Good that shall be in our  
Power. For the due improvement  
of this Text ( omitting the Con-  
text, or the Connexion of the Words  
with the preceding )

**B**

**I shall**

## 2 *A Sermon before the*

I shall examine,

1. What it is that our hand findeth to Do? What is that Work that is expected from Us?

2. I shall consider the Reason, suggested in the Text, why we ought to be thus vigorous in the discharge of our Duty: Because there is no Work can be done in the Grave. *The Night cometh when no man can work.* Death will quickly come to fetch us hence. We must leave this World, and remove into the next; and then all our Designs and Projects are at an end. Therefore, *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.*

3. I shall make Particular Application, with respect to the Occasion of this Solemn Meeting.

1. What

## *Sons of Clergy-men.* 3

1. What is it that our hand findeth to do? What is that Work that is expected from Us?

To explain this more distinctly, I must re-mind you, That Man doth consist of *Two Parts*; An *Immortal Soul*, and a *Mortal Body*. And there is a Work to be done, with respect to both These.

1. As to the *Body*: Whilst Man was in the State of Innocence, there was little work to be done. All the Accommodations for the Body, not only for its Necessity, but Delight, were very easily provided. There was no occasion for Garments to cover his Nakedness, nor Houses to be built for Shelter and Defence. And as to his Food,

#### 4 *A Sermon before the*

for the Nourishment of his Body, that was ready provided: For he was placed in a Garden full of delicious Fruit, of which he had the liberty to eat what he pleased, except of one Tree, which was as wholesome and delicious as the rest, but was only forbidden him for the tryal of his Obedience.

But when *Adam*, for his Sin and Disobedience, was turned out of Paradise, then this Doom was pronounced upon him: *In the Sweat of thy brows shalt thou eat thy Bread. Cursed is the Ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life.* So that, now, Men rise up early, and sit up late; and deprive themselves of their beloved Sleep, that they may eat Bread; that they may Live and Subsist:

For

## *Sons of Clergy-men.* 5

For he that laboureth, laboureth for himself, for his Mouth craveth it of him.

But besides Food, Garments are now necessary: Not only for Ornament (to cover our Nakedness) but also for Defence (against Heat and Cold, and the Extremity of Weather.)

Houses likewise are to be built; not only to Eat and Drink, and to Sleep in; but also to secure our Properties against the Ravage of Brute Beasts, and the Injuries of more Brutish Men.

And the procuring of these Conveniences and Accommodations, is the occasion of all those Arts and Trades that are so well known in the World.

## 6 *A Sermon before the*

In these several ways of Living, Men are obliged to be active and diligent, and then they may expect God's Blessing upon their Endeavours. For tho *Drowsiness shall cloath a man with rags, yet the hand of the diligent maketh rich.* Therefore, *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.*

But besides this Lump of Flesh, this Earthly Body, which must lye rotting and mouldring in the Grave till the Resurrection, we have a nobler Part, a Spiritual and Immortal Soul; which both requires and deserves our utmost Diligence for its Welfare and Preservation.

This comfortable Truth, That the Soul, being a Spiritual Substance, is Immortal, and shall Live  
for

for ever, is the Foundation and Encouragement of all Religion. And the not believing, or the not considering of it, is the chief Reason of all that Extravagance and Debauchery that is so frequent in the World.

For the Inference of St. Paul is Firm and Logical; *If the Dead rise not, let us eat and drink, for to morrow we Die.* Which is thus Paraphrased by those ungodly ones in the Book of Wisdom, chap. 2. *Our life is short and tedious, and in the Death of a man there is no remedy: neither was there any man known to have returned from the Grave. For we are born at all adventure; and we shall be hereafter as though we had never been. Come on therefore, let us enjoy the good things that are pre-*

## 8 A Sermon before the

sent--- Let us crown our selves with  
Rose-buds--- Let none of us go with-  
out his part of our Voluptuousness: let  
us leave tokens of our Joyfulness in eve-  
ry Place: For this is our Portion, and  
our Lot is this.

But for thy Conviction, O thou  
dull unthinking Atheist, lift up  
thine Eyes, and then tell me what  
thou seest. Observe that vast Ex-  
panse, that Triumphal Arch, that  
Stately Canopy which hangs over  
thy Head. Canst thou be so sot-  
tish as to fancy, that this is the Ter-  
minus, the utmost Extremity, the  
Boundaries of the Universe? Is  
there nothing further than what  
thou seest, or beyond what thine  
Eye can reach? Are there not vast  
unknown Regions far above, and  
beyond these visible Heavens? And  
canst

## Sons of Clergy-men. 9

canst thou be so stupid as to suppose, that those Stately Apartments are empty and unfurnished, like a wild Desert without Inhabitants? Is there not therefore an higher World for Spirits to inhabit, to converse in, as well as this lower Orb for Flesh and Blood to grovel in? Are there not Mansions of Glory, Splendid and Stately Apartments in those Upper Regions? And are not great Things, unexpressible Satisfactions there prepared for those that Love God? *Let your Conversation therefore be in Heaven.* Meditate, think and contrive, how, and by what means you may come to that happy Place; How ye may be Partakers of the Glory which shall be revealed.

We

20 *A Sermon before the*

We are indeed allowed, nay it is our Duty to take care of our Bodies : To Feed, to Cloathe, and Preserve them. But sure all our Time and Concern should not be employed for this perishing Part, but some share of it should be allowed for an Immortal Soul ; Some care should be taken of *that*, to Train it up to Eternity.

What is it therefore that we are to Do in this Case ? What Work is to be done for the sake of a precious and immortal Soul ?

A full and distinct Answer to this Question , would oblige me to Explain the Whole Duty of Man. But that being not to be attempted in a single Sermon ; and that I may confine my Self to the Solemn Occasion of our  
pre-

## **Sons of Clergy-men. II**

present Meeting; I shall Instance  
only in these Two Particulars,

The great Work and Business  
we have to Do in this World is,

1. To Adorn our Souls with  
those Divine Vertues and Graces,  
whereby we are made like unto  
God, and are qualified and prepa-  
red for the Conversation of the  
Blessed in another World.

2. We are diligently to employ  
our Talents, our Gifts and Graces  
for the Benefit of Others.

1. The great Work we have to  
do in this World; is to Adorn our  
Souls with those Divine Vertues  
and Graces, whereby we are made  
like

12 *A Sermon before the*

like unto God ; and are qualified and prepared for the Conversation of the Blessed in another World.

If my enlargement upon this Topick, shall be censur'd as foreign to this Day's Solemnity (the Design of which is to promote and encourage Charitable Distributions) I do thus vindicate my self in the words of St. James c. 1. v. 27. *Pure Religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, not only To visit the Fatherless and Widows in their Affliction; not only, To relieve and comfort the Poor and Distressed, but also To keep himself unspotted from the World.*

Let me therefore thus seasonably admonish the man of Charitable Inclinations, That he offer  
up

*Sons of Clergy-men.* 13

up his Charity with a clean hand,  
and a pure heart : Otherwise  
though he should bestow all his  
Goods to feed the Poor ; though he  
should Distribute his whole Estate,  
and still wallow in Lust, it will  
profit him nothing : God will not ac-  
cept him.

From hence my present enlarge-  
ment will appear pertinent and  
proper, whilst I remind you, To  
adorn your Souls with divine Ver-  
tues and Graces ; and thereby to  
Qualify and prepare your Selves  
for the Conversation of the Bles-  
sed.

Though the Allwise and good  
God hath provided an Eternal hap-  
piness for Mankind ; yet this hap-  
piness is not given indifferently and  
promiscuously to All, but only to  
those

## 14 *A Sermon before the*

those who are duly Qualified to receive it.

For, though God's Love to Mankind is Free and Absolute, *respectu Principii*, or *causa efficientis motive* (as the Schools phrase it)

That is, Though there is no antecedent Merit, or Obligation on Man's part, that could move God to provide and promise such a Happiness; yet in *Executione*, and *respectu Nostri*, it is Conditional. That is, such is the Divine Oeconomy, that this Eternal Life shall not actually be conferr'd on any Person, without the performance of certain Conditions.

*If thou wilt enter into life* (saith our Blessed Saviour) *Keep the Commandments*, Mar. 19. 17. Christ being made perfect, he became the Au-  
thor

## Sons of Clergy-men. 15

abor of eternal Salvation to all them that obey him, Heb. 5. 9. And St. Paul gives thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light, Col. 1. 12. Plainly intimating, That only those shall partake of this glorious Inheritance, who are made meet, that is, duely qualified and prepared for it.

For, To be in Heaven, is not only to be in a fine delightful Place (which is the vulgar notion of it, though doubtless Heaven consider'd as a Place, is adorned with a splendor far above any humane apprehension;) But the happiness of Heaven doth chiefly arise from a Frame and Temper of Mind; When there is a suitableness betwixt  
the

16 *A Sermon before the*

the faculties of the Soul, and those glorious Objects.

For otherwise, without such suitableness and Proportion, Heaven would not be what really it is, a Place of Satisfaction and enjoyment, but of aversion and Torment. Which I shall endeavour to explain by this familiar Allusion.

Suppose in a most stately Room richly adorned, a select Society of Friends to be placed; Where the Eye is diverted with most curious Pictures, the Smell refreshed with richest Perfume, and at the same time the Ear entertained with a Consort of the most ravishing Musick:

Into this Room, thus finely disposed for diversion and delight, suppose

*Sons of Clergy-men.* 17

Suppose a Company of hungry Swine to be driven. With what uneasiness would they grunt and ramble about? What would the Pictures, the Perfumes or the Musick signify to these ravenous Creatures? Do but open the Door, with what haste do they tumble into the next Dunghil; there to gorge and satiate themselves with Filth and Garbage.

This is the very Emblem of a Wicked and Sensual Man.

For, supposing it possible (which yet is impossible, since Truth itself hath declared, That no unclean thing shall enter there;) I say, supposing it possible, that a carnal sinful Man, with all his vicious Inclinations, might be admitted into the Kingdom of Heaven;

## 18 *A Sermon before the*

ven; it would not be a Heaven, i. e. a Place of Rest and Satisfaction to him. For instance:

He who is Lascivious and Intemperate; the whole business of whose Life is to heighten his Desires, and make them rampant: Or, in the Language of the Apostle; *To make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof*: What would this Man do in Heaven; where there is neither Eating nor Drinking; Marrying, nor giving in Marriage? A Mahomet's Paradise might indeed afford him some Entertainment: but the Joys of Heaven are too pure and refined for the relish of a Goat.

Thus,

Thus, to give another Instance; Suppose an Envious, Malicious, Revengeful Person were admitted into Heaven; a Man so malignant, that he is always Murmuring and Repining at the Prosperity of Others; so narrow-soul'd, as if he was born only for himself, and to promote his own Satisfaction; What Conversation, what Intimacy and Friendship could there be, betwixt such a spiteful selfish Wretch, and those Glorious peaceable Spirits, who are always joying and rejoicing in each other's Happiness as their own?

I might instance in any other Vice. So that, I say, were it possible that a Wicked Man might be admitted into that glorious

20 *A Sermon before the*

Place called Heaven, where the Blessed Saints and Angels do inhabit; yet because he hath not acquired their heavenly Temper, he can have no Conversation with them, nor participate of their Pleasures.

For the true Notion of Pleasure is this; viz. The Application of an Object to its proper Faculty. When there is a Correspondence and Agreement between the Object and the Faculty, which is to taste and enjoy it, then there ariseth that which we call Pleasure, Joy and Satisfaction.

For though the most pleasing and agreeable Object may be presented; yet unless the Faculty is duly disposed to be united to it, there is no Pleasure.

*Truly*

Truly the Light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the Eyes to behold the Sun, Eccl. 11. 7. But to fore and weak Eyes, Light is offensive, and the brightness of the Sun is Pain and Torment.

The full Soul loatheth an Honey-comb; and the greatest Dainties do nauseate, where there is no Appetite.

Thus, supposing a Wicked sensual Man were placed in Heaven; yet he would have no appetite nor inclination to those glorious Objects which are there presented. And the Reason is this; Because he hath so strong an Antipathy against them whilst he is in this World: *His God is his Belly, his Glory is in his shame, he minds Earthly things*, Phil. 3. 19. The Sab-

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bath is a Burden, and the whole Service of God is a Torment to him. Oaths and Curses are more frequent than his Prayers; and the Roarings and Howlings of a Debauch, are greater Refreshments than Singing *Hallelujahs* to his Maker.

Now since in the main, we shall be of the same Temper and Disposition when we come into the other World, as we are when we leave *this*; it hence follows, That wicked, lustful, intemperate, envious, malicious Souls, who leave this World with these Vices unsubdued, will have the same vicious Inclinations in the next: *He that is filthy, will be filthy still.* And then, pray, what satisfaction can these Men find in the Blessed Employment

ployment of that happy Place?  
To be ever Praising, Admiring,  
and Adoring the infinite Perfection-  
ons of that Glorious God, whose  
Service in this World was neg-  
lected, his Commands contemn-  
ed; nay perhaps whose very Be-  
ing was Denied, Burlesqued, and  
Ridiculed.

From these Premisses I infer;  
That it would be no advantage to  
us, to have a Right and Title to  
Heaven, unless we were antece-  
dently qualified and disposed for  
it. For, to be happy, is to enjoy  
what we desire, and to live with  
those whom we love. But there  
is nothing in Heaven suitable to  
the Desires and Appetites of a  
Wicked sensual Man: For all the  
Joys of that happy Place, and the  
C 4 Delights

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Delights of that State, are purely Spiritual; and can only be relished by those, who have purified themselves as God is pure.

This therefore is the *First* great Work we have to do in this Life; even to Adorn our Souls with those Divine Vertues and Graces, whereby we are made like unto God; and are qualified and prepared for the Conversation of the Blessed in another World,

2. Another great Work we have to do in this World, is to employ our Talents, our Gifts and our Graces; for the Benefit of Others.

As

As Man is a Rational, so he is a Sociable Creature: And as such, is obliged, not only to please and enjoy himself; but also to be useful and serviceable to Others. In order hereunto, the great Lord and Sovereign of the World, hath given to the Children of Men several Talents, that is, Abilities, Advantages, and Opportunities of Action; As is intimated in the Parable, *Matth. 13.*

Now these Talents are given us in Trust, as unto Stewards: Not to bury them in Sloth; nor to waste them profusely, according to our own fancies; but to employ them discreetly for the benefit of Others, according to the direction of our great Lord and Master.

And

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And as an Encouragement to the due execution of this Trust, he hath annexed Rewards and Punishments.

And First, There is a Glorious Reward, a Crown, a Kingdom.

The which Reward is not meritoriously due to the Employment of our Talents; but only by Promise; and of God's free Will and Pleasure: *Be thou faithful unto Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life, Rev. 2. 10.*

And as there is a Reward promised to our Obedience, so on the other hand, there is a Punishment threatned to our Disobedience, or the Male-Administration of our Trust.

The

The unprofitable Servant, who only hid his Lord's Talent (how much more then, if he had misapply'd it?) was cast into outer Darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of Teeth.

Now since there is so glorious a Reward, and so severe a Punishment: And since, as I have already suggested, this Life only is our time of Tryal and Probation for Eternity; and that whatever is to be done by us, to obtain the Favour of God, and a Blessed Immortality, must be done in this Life; it concerns us to gird up our Loins; To be active and diligent to finish the great Work God hath given us to do.

'Tis

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'Tis Solomon's Advice here in my Text, *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might ; for there is no Work, nor Device, nor Knowledge, nor Wisdom in the Grave, whither thou goest.* No Work, nor Knowledge in the Grave. The meaning of which Expression is not this (as at first view the words may seem to suggest) viz. That the next World is an idle unactive State; Where we shall Know nothing, and have nothing to do: As if the Happiness of Heaven did consist in sitting in a Maze, and gazing upon a fine, splendid, stately Place: Such a Notion as this is very gross and defective.

For if the Soul, whilst in this World (where it is clogg'd with this Lump of Clay, this Clot of Phlegm,

Phlegm, this dull, heavy, corruptible Body ) is so brisk and nimble ; - how active and vigorous will this Spark of Heavenly Flame blaze forth and explain it self, when freed from its confinement, this dark Lanthorn of the Body ? When the Prison-doors are broke open, and it breathes in free Air ; and shall be admitted into the Society of an innumerable Company of Angels ; and of the Spirits of just men made perfect. O what variety of Employments , and of endearing Conversation will there then be ! But what those Employments shall be, and how that Heavenly Conversation shall be managed , as it doth not belong to this present Argument to examine , so indeed they are too big for our

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our present Thoughts to discover.

When therefore the Wise-man doth admonish us, That there is no *Work* nor *Device* in the Grave: His meaning is plainly this; That Death puts an End to our Working for the other World. Nothing shall be brought to our Account at the Day of Judgment, but the Good or Evil we do whilst we Live here. 'Tis for this only we shall receive our Reward or Punishment, proportionably to the wise Improvement or neglect of our Talents.

'Tis therefore our Interest as well as Duty, to be very active and diligent, in doing all the Good we can whilst we are in this World,

## *Sons of Clergy-men.* 31

World, before we go hence and are no more seen.

And this I shall now take the freedom more particularly to enforce, with respect to the Occasion of your present Meeting.

You are here met (*Men, Fathers, and Brethren*) according to your Annual Custom, to recommend your Persons and Charitable Undertakings to the Blessing of God, by this devout appearance in the House of Prayer. From whence you walk together as Friends, in Solemn Procession to your Feast of Charity.

So that the Design of this Days Solemnity, is plainly *Twofold*:

1. To

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1. To Credit, and to own your Profession.

2. To relieve and provide for your poor Dependants; both Widows and Children.

1. It is very seasonable, by this solemn Appearance, to credit and to own your Profession.

For such is the petulant humour, not to say malicious Design, of too many in this Age, they are pleased to have very mean diminishing Thoughts of the Clergy. And since out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh, they too often express those Thoughts by as mean and undecent Language.

The

## Sons of Clergy-men. 33

The fluency of some men's Zeal on such an occasion is very remarkable: and their conceits are never so railed, so Sparkling and Triumphant, as when they encounter the Tribe of *Levi*.

O! with what slight and contempt is the Clergy then treated! With what scorn the Witlings look down upon the Man in Black!

How will every Trifling Thing that can but chatter Sense, be then practising upon us! Nay, When all other Topicks do fail, our very Profession must be our Crime; and the word *Parson*, if roundly and emphatically pronounced, shall be voted Wit.

And not only the Clergy, but their Descendants also shall have

D

share

34 *A Sermon before the*

share in the Reflection. To be born of a Church-man, or in these men's Language, to be *the Son of a Priest*, shall diminish our Character, and be a Blot in our Escutcheon.

But I shall not stain the Glory of this Day, by a further Repetition of their Invidious Censures. All which, to say no more, are most effectually confuted by the Splendor of this Appearance. And if Success, which is often urged against us, may be admitted as an Argument for the Goodness of a Cause; here's an ample Vindication of the Marriage of the Clergy; Which, through the Blessing of God upon your honest Endeavours, hath furnished the Publick with Men  
of

of the best Figure, of the greatest Rank and Order, both in Church and State. In short; If those who malign and asperse you, will but open their Eyes, they may this Day observe such a Parade, such a Body of Men, as is the Envy of Rome, and the Glory of the Reformation.

May it still be your Care to Maintain your Character; To be as Good as you are Great. Which gives me the occasion very humbly to remind you of the *Second*, and indeed the chief Design of your Charter: Which is,

2. To Relieve and Provide for your poor Dependants, both Widows and Children.

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And here I shall not so far suspect your Inclinations, as to enlarge and enforce the usual Motives to Charitable Distributions.

I might remind you, That Charity, which is an Imitation of the Divine Nature, is,

1. The most proper and principal Expression of your Gratitude to God.

2. It is an Act of Justice to the Poor.

3. It is an Act of Prudence, and great Advantage to your Selves: Because God, who is Faithful, hath promised, that it shall most plentifully be Rewarded,

1. In this Life. 2. The Life to come.

With

With respect to this Life, there are Three signal Advantages of a well-regulated Charity. It is the best Expedient, 1. *To Secure and Preserve an Estate.* 2. *To Improve and Increase an Estate.* 3. *To Bless and Sanctify an Estate.* And Lastly, Which is the highest and most pressing Motive, You have a comfortable Assurance, That your Charity shall most plentifully be Rewarded in the Life to come.

These are very proper and seasonable Topicks for further enlargement. But having already prevented my self, \* I must not impose on so great an Audience. And shall therefore say nothing further concerning Charity

\* Vid. *Theol. Discourse of Wills and Testaments.*

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rity in General. But shall only  
crave your Patience, whilst I ap-  
ply my Self more particularly to  
the Concerns of this Corporation.

*Fathers and Brethren,*

You are encouraged and enabled  
by the Royal Favour, to pursue  
and promote your own Charita-  
ble Inclinations, in making Pro-  
vision for poor Widows and Chil-  
dren of the Clergy. And though  
the forwardness of your Mind, and  
your Zeal hath provoked very  
many, who have been Kind and  
Generous in Gifts and Legacies;  
yet you are very sensible, that  
your Fund or Yearly Revenue is  
not proportioned to Expectations  
from it. And many of your poor  
Petitioners

Petitioners are like to be Petitioners still, unless some more effectual Method can be contrived for their Support and Relief.

It is not decent for a Person of my Meanness to be too forward in his Dictates, especially not in this Place, for I know to whom I speak. But since you have been pleased to open my Mouth, and to make me your Advocate for the Fatherless and the Widow (whose Cause I do most chearfully plead) I must crave your Acceptance, whilst I express my Self as followeth.

The Clergy of this Nation and their Descendants, are a considerable Body of Men; very able,

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as well as willing, to Relieve their poor Dependants. And if your Charity (though in small Proportions) could be fix'd, certain, and successive, a very little time, through the Blessing of God, would convince you of the happy Fruits and Effects of it.

I say, a Charity that is fix'd and successive. For I must take the freedom to remind you (what you are all sensible of) That it is not Occasional Charity (though sometimes very encouraging) that can answer the Ends of this Corporation. But a constant settled Succession of small Contributions (so small as not to be felt by Particular Persons) would enable you, in some Competent Proportion, to Relieve on all Occasions.

But

But now the great Difficulty is,  
How these intended Contributions  
can be raised?

This indeed will require some  
Thought and Application of Mind.  
And I most humbly recommend  
it to your Care and Conduct.  
And I earnestly beg of you not to  
be Discouraged, though your First  
Attempt may not answer Expecta-  
tion. Do you lay the Foundation,  
and succeeding Ages may build  
upon it.

And to quicken your Zeal for  
so good a Work, give me leave  
to represent to you, That the  
Wants of *your* Poor are great, and  
call loudly for your help. And I  
am

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am further encouraged to be importunate with you in their behalf, because I now beg for those who cannot beg for themselves.

There are indeed a Sort of Poor, very forward and pressing, who will even extort your Charity by their impertinent Clamours. But *your* Poor do beg in Silence.

The Ingenuity of their Education, the Modesty of their Temper, lays restraint upon them. Generous Spirits will even sink in their Misery, and endure the utmost Extremity, before they will make known their Wants to their insulting Neighbours, or be relieved by a Parish.----Relieved by a Parish, did I say! *Fathers and Brethren*, allow me this freedom,

'Tis

It is a Reflection not only upon  
 the Wisdom, but even the Christiani-  
 ty of a Nation, that the Reliefs  
 of a Church-man should be relieved  
 by a Parish.

And if here it shall be Replied (as  
 I know it will by some men) That  
 the Clergy must then learn more  
 Prudence, and not, by living a-  
 bove their Preferments, expose  
 their Wives and Children to such  
 scandalous Want: To this I easily  
 Rejoin;

That several Church-Livings  
 (being Improprate) are of so small  
 value, that the Incumbent is  
 scarce able to Subsist, much less  
 can he expect to make Provision  
 for Posterity.

This .

#### 44 *A Sermon before the*

This is indeed a very sad Truth. And though there is a way to redress this Grievance, yet it is too big for a private Thought.

And, O that such an Expedient might be found! That the many Thousand poor, despised, not to say, Oppressed *Vicars* of the Church of *England*, might no longer eat the Bread of Sorrow. The Wisdom and Authority of a *Parliament* (and nothing less than that) can effectually relieve them. We hope and breathe for it.

In th'interim, *The Poor*, your Poor, will be always with you, to exercise their Patience and your Charity.

*Charity,*

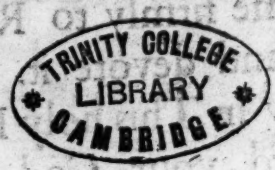
*Charity*, that is the proper Work and Business of this Day. I do not only mean what you leave with the *Stewards* (though their Generous care in placing out of Children deserves your Encouragement) but I chiefly design what is paid in yearly to the *Treasurers* of the Corporation, for a constant, settled, perpetual Fund.

And though you do not this Day actually give it, yet this is the Time firmly to Resolve it: Dedicate and devote it. Make a solemn Vow in This holy Place; And the Lord your God accept you.

*Now*

Now to God the Father, God the  
 Son, and God the Holy Ghost,  
 Three Persons but One Glo-  
 rious God, be ascribed, as is  
 most due, all Honour, Power,  
 and Praise, henceforth and for  
 Ever. Amen.

F I N I S



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